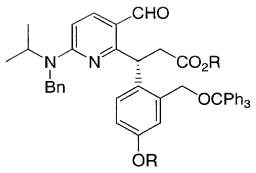
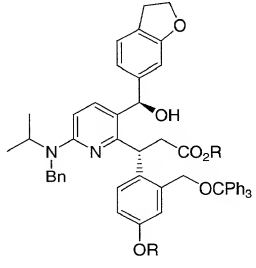


IIa

in the presence of a first aprotic solvent at a temperature range of about -80°C to about 30°C to give a Grignard addition product of Formula IIIa, and



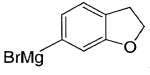
IIIa

(2) adding phosphoramide reagent to a mixture of the Grignard addition product of Formula IIIa in a second aprotic solvent and a base at a temperature range of about -80°C to about 30°C to produce the desired compound of Formula Ia.

16. The process of Claim 15, wherein the first or second aprotic solvent is selected from the group consisting of tetrahydrofuran, acetonitrile, dimethylacetamide, dimethylformamide, diethyl ether, N-methylpyrrolidinone, dichloromethane, methyl t-butyl ether, toluene, benzene, hexane, pentane, dioxane, and a mixture thereof.

17. The process of Claim 16, wherein the first aprotic solvent is a 1:1 mixture of N-methylpyrrolidinone and tetrahydrofuran at a temperature range of about -40°C to about -50°C or N-methylpyrrolidinone at temperature range of about -20°C to about -10°C.

18. The process of Claim 17, wherein the Grignard reagent is



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19. The process of Claim 18, wherein the temperature range in step (1) is about -50°C to about -40°C.

20. The process of Claim 19, wherein the phosphoramide reagent is
N,N,N,N-tetramethylphosphorodiamidic chloride,
N,N,N,N-tetramethylphosphorodiamidic bromide,
N,N,N,N- tetraethylphosphorodiamidic chloride,
N,N,N,N-tetraethylphosphorodiamidic bromide,
N,N,N,N-tetraisopropylphosphorodiamidic chloride,
N,N,N,N-tetraisopropylphosphorodiamidic bromide,
N,N,N,N-tetraphenylphosphorodiamidic chloride, or
N,N,N,N-tetraphenylphosphorodiamidic bromide.

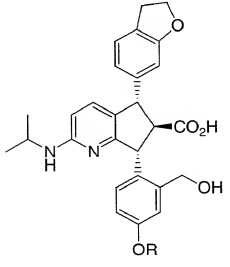
21. The process of Claim 20, wherein the base is selected from the group consisting of n-butyl lithium, phenyl lithium, potassium *tert*-butoxide, sodium hydride, lithium diisopropylamide, lithium diethylamide, lithium dimethylamide, potassium hexamethyldisilazide, sodium hexamethyldisilazide, and lithium hexamethyldisilazide.

22. The process of Claim 21, wherein the base is sodium hexamethyldisilazide which is present in amounts between about 1 equivalent and about 6 equivalents relative to the amount of the phosphoramide reagent.

23. The process of Claim 22, wherein the second aprotic solvent is THF or a mixture of THF and toluene.

24. The process of Claim 23, wherein the temperature range in step (2) is about -20°C to about 25°C.

25. A process for preparing a compound of Formula Ia,



Ia

wherein R is independently H or (C_1-C_6)-alkyl comprising the steps of:

(1) reacting an α,β-unsaturated ester